

THE SENATE SPOTLIGHT

Georgia State Senate Newsletter



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Staff members walk to raise funds for breast cancer

For three days, legislative assistants Donna Yeomans and Denese Sampson walked 60 miles along Atlanta's streets in a noble effort to help breast cancer research. From October 20-22, Yeomans and Sampson participated in the Atlanta Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk to raise funds and awareness for the Susan G. Koman foundation.

After training for 16 weeks, they felt the experience was well worth it.

"This event helps people to see what a woman walks through when she's diagnosed with breast cancer," said Yeomans when asked about her experience. Sampson also said that she and Yeomans participated because they wanted to "do something bigger than themselves to help others."

Yeomans and Sampson called their team the "Capitol Crusaders," in

order to represent all those working at the Georgia State Senate. They are hoping to add more Senate employees to the team next year.

Along with the other 2,580 participants, each walker is required to raise at least \$2,200 in funds, and Yeomans and Sampson are still working hard to collect donations.

Their goal is to complete fund raising for this year and to organize a team for the 2007 walk. They encourage everyone at the Senate to get involved and help support this worthy cause.

For information on how to participate, go to www.the3day.org.



Joint Economic Development Committee meets at Tallulah Gorge

Senator Nancy Schaefer recently welcomed Chairmen Chip Pearson and Vance Smith and other members of the General Assembly to northeast Georgia for a joint meeting of

the Senate and House Economic Development Committees at the Jane Hurt Yarn Interpretive Center in Tallulah Gorge State Park. "I'm so happy to welcome the Committee to this gorgeous area of the state," said Sen. Pearson. "We are so pleased with this year's economic success in Georgia – the Kia plant in west Georgia, and the Gulfstream deal that will add many important new jobs – but I feel that we can do even better in the future. One way to start is to bring more tourism dollars to the gorgeous state parks and sites of interest in north Georgia," he added. "As we move toward the 2007 legislative session, we'll look to apply conservative, common-sense, market-based solutions to

promote new economic development opportunities in our state," said Chairman Pearson. "Tourism is the number two industry in Georgia, and it's especially important to the economy here in northeast Georgia. So, we're up here looking at the ways to improve tourism in places like Black Rock Mountain State Park and, of course, Tallulah Gorge."

Committee members attended the Rabun County Chamber of Commerce meeting, and later heard presentations from Economic Development Commissioner Craig Lesser, local elected officials and several other speakers.



Senator Hooks recognized as new “dean” of Senate

Senator George Hooks will be the new “dean” of the Georgia Senate on January 8, 2007—as he will be the longest serving member of the Upper Chamber. Sen. Terrell Starr, who served in the legislature for nearly 40 years, announced his retirement at the end of the 2006 legislative session, and decided not to run for a 19th consecutive term.

“Sen. Hooks is one of the most respected members of the state Senate,” Sen. Starr said. “His knowledge of and experience in state government is invaluable to his colleagues and his constituents back home.”

Sen. Hooks has served in the Senate since 1991, and has held several leadership positions — including chairmanships of the Rules Committee and the influential Appropriations Committee. During his service

in the House from 1981-1990, Sen. Hooks served as Gov. Joe Frank Harris’ administration floor leader.

The Georgia Senate honors a seniority system, similar to that of the U.S. Senate, which gives special recognition to long-serving members, including key committee assignments and staff preferences. Currently, Sen. Hooks is a member of the Senate Appropriations, Economic Development, Natural Resources and the Environment and the Rules committees.

Known for his deep southern drawl and his clever repartee on the Senate floor during debate, Sen. Hooks also is credited as the



“unofficial” historian of the Georgia legislature and the gold-domed State Capitol.

With the population explosion of the metro Atlanta region in recent years, Sen. Hook’s distinction is of particular importance to his rural district in southwest Georgia — the largest in Georgia and the nation — where he represents 12

counties, 37 cities and nearly 4,000 miles of Georgia.

Sen. Hooks will begin his 14th consecutive term in the Georgia General Assembly in January.

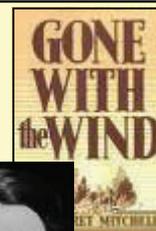
“Sen. Hooks is one of the most respected members of the state Senate,” said Terrell Starr of Sen. Hooks’ future status as “dean” of the Senate.



This month in Georgia history



- ◆ Nov. 13, 1884: Excavation began for the new Georgia State Capitol.
- ◆ Nov. 8, 1900: *Gone with the Wind* author Margaret Mitchell is born in Atlanta.



- ◆ Nov. 2, 1976: Jimmy Carter elected



president, defeating incumbent Gerald Ford.



- ◆ Nov. 3, 1992: Georgia voters approved a constitutional amendment legalizing the Georgia state lottery.



Employee Spotlight on... JASON FERNANDES

What is your current position with the Senate?

I am the Senior Program Analyst for the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office (SBEO). I will have worked for the Senate for three years in December. My responsibilities include tracking and investigating items of budgetary interest to the Senate for programs related to Health and Human services.

Describe your professional background and what brought you to the General Assembly.

I have a BS in International Business from Spring Hill College in Alabama. Prior to working for the Senate, I was a teller at the Bank of America's Lindbergh Plaza branch. Being a teller was probably the hardest job I have ever had. People are very sensitive when it comes to their money, so I had to learn very fast how to resolve tense situations and get to the heart of the problem. I found out about an opening at SBEO and submitted my resume. The rest is history!



Describe your personal background.

My family is originally from India and immigrated to Texas in the early 1970s. I was born and raised in a small west Texas town called Midland. Most people don't recognize the name of my hometown until I mention that Baby Jessica fell down the well there in 1987.

My father worked as an engineer in a petroleum company and when west Texas oil production dried up, we were forced to move to Birmingham, AL, to find work. As a nine-year-old who lived in the desert his entire life, I was more used to decorating tumbleweeds than live trees for Christmas, so when we arrived in Birmingham, it was overwhelming to see so many trees in one place.

How do you spend your time away from work?

I love to travel and experience different cultures. I have a goal of taking one big trip each year to see different parts of the world.

First, I went to the holy lands in Israel. This year, I went backpacking in Turkey and Greece, and if I can save up enough money, next year I would like to visit Brazil and raft down the Amazon. I also like to play flag football and volleyball for my church league.

Who is your greatest influence?

My parents are my greatest influence. Coming from India, they saw education as the key to breaking from poverty, so my brother and I never lacked for educational or mind-expanding experiences. Until recently, I never realized the sacrifices they made to provide that for us. They also embraced their adopted country enthusiastically and never failed to teach my brother and me how lucky we were to be here.

What book are you currently reading?

I just started the new John Grisham book, *The Innocent Man*. I love legal thriller books and Grisham is the king of the genre.



Monthly Numbers

The revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for the month of October 2006 (FY07) totaled \$1,342,193,000 compared to \$1,304,776,000 for October 2005 (FY06), which is an increase of \$37,417,000 or 2.9 percent.

The percentage increase year-to-date for FY07 compared to FY06 is 5.6 percent.



Weekends in November

You deserve a break! Explore some of the events happening in Georgia. Here is an update on current events throughout the state.

ATLANTA—**Louvre Atlanta** : High Museum of Art : Through 2009
<http://www.louvreatlanta.org/en/home>

ATLANTA—**Martinis & Imax** : Fernbank Museum : Through November
<http://www.fernbank.edu/museum/martinis.html>

HELEN— **Lighting of the Village** : Nov. 24 : <http://www.helenga.org/>

SAVANNAH— **Savannah Thanksgiving Dinner Cruise** : <http://www.savannahriverboat.com>



**WISHING
 A
 HAPPY
 BIRTHDAY
 TO :**

NOVEMBER 2006

- Senator **Brian Kemp** Nov. 2nd
- Senator **John Douglas** Nov. 7th
- Senator **Ralph Hudgens**Nov. 21st
- Senator **Joseph Carter**Nov. 26th
- Senator **Chip Pearson** Nov. 28th
- Carmen Alexander**, Legislative AssistantNov. 14th
- Laurie Sparks**, Legislative Assistant.....Nov. 14th
- Kathleen Cominski**, Legislative Assistant Nov. 18th
- Merri Brantley**, Director of Senate Press OfficeNov. 3rd
- Jill Fike**, Director of Senate Research Office..... Nov. 3rd
- Patsy Turner**, Legislative Counsel Nov. 9th
- Patrick Brown**, Fiscal Office Nov. 18th
- Taryn Murphy**, Senate Research Office.....Nov. 27th